

Thomas R. Acevedo



Thomas Acevedo was hired by the Board of Directors of to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the corporation S&K Technologies in June 2007. In October 2007, Mr. Acevedo assumed the duties of CEO for S&K Technologies, Inc., the parent company for a family of companies, one of which is S&K Technologies. Prior to his positions at S&K Technologies, Mr. Acevedo worked as the Chief of Staff for governmental operations for the Mohegan Tribe. Beyond the day-to-day management of tribal governmental operations, this position evolved into several additional responsibilities. Among those responsibilities was serving on the four-member management board of the Mohegan Sun Casino during the period the management of the casino was conducted through a management contract with Trading Cove Associates. Once the tribe bought out Trading Cove Associates management contract, and the tribe assumed direct management of the casino, Mr. Acevedo then served on the Executive Management Committee for Mohegan Sun. He served as the Chief of Staff and as the Special Assistant for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs for the National Indian Gaming and the Chief of Operations for the Council of Energy Resource Tribes (CERT) with offices in Denver, CO. CERT is a technical services non-profit corporation for more than 40 member tribes. He was also employed by the Salish & Kootenai Tribes of Montana, first in the legal department and later as the CEO of S&K Holding, Inc.

Mr. Acevedo received his Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from the University of Montana and graduated the University of New Mexico School of Law. He is a member of several associations including the Virginia State Bar and the Federal Bar Association. Mr. Acevedo was a speaker at numerous conferences and legislative bodies; testified before the Canadian Royal Commission on Economic Development for First Nations; provided testimony to both Houses of Congress on various Indian issues; spoke at the Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development at Harvard; and presented at the G2 conference on Indian gaming.

Gregory Anderson



Gregory Anderson is the Superintendent of the Eufaula Dormitory in Eufaula, OK. He has been involved in Indian education for 27 years at many levels and has served on numerous Federal committees for improvement and reform in Indian education.

Mr. Anderson was appointed in April 2002 by President George W. Bush to serve on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NAICE) and was re-appointed by President Barack Obama to continue serving on NACIE in August 2010. The NACIE members are appointed by the President and advise the Secretary of Education on issues such as funding, administration, and the development of regulations and

administrative policies related to Indian education programs.

He was selected in 2002 to serve on the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Negotiated Rulemaking Committee. He served as Co-chairman for the committee that developed recommendations for proposed regulations for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. These issues related to several specific areas that affected Indian education. He is currently serving a second term as Co-chairman for the NCLB School Facilities and Construction Negotiated Rulemaking Committee convened in January 2010. The Secretary of the Interior established this committee for purposes of preparing a catalog and reports regarding the physical conditions of Bureau-funded schools and to revise home living (dormitory) standards.

In July 2010, Oklahoma Governor Brad Henry appointed Mr. Anderson to the Oklahoma Advisory Council (OACIE) on Indian Education. The OACIE was created to promote equitable and culturally relevant learning environments, educational opportunities, and instructional material for Native American students enrolled in public schools in the state. The legislation (HB 2929) forming the council was signed by Governor Henry and became effective July 1, 2010.

He is involved in public service at the local level by serving as Vice-Mayor and Council President for the city of Eufaula, OK. He has served for 12 years in this capacity.

Mr. Anderson is a graduate of Eufaula High School and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from the University of Oklahoma, a master's degree in education administration from East Central Oklahoma University, and a Superintendent's Certification through the Oklahoma State Department of Education. He resides in Eufaula, OK, and is married to Becky Anderson. They have two children, son Brett, 17, and daughter Alex, 13, who attend Eufaula Public Schools.

Theresa Arevgaq John



Dr. Theresa Arevgaq John is an Associate Professor in the Department of Alaska Native and Rural Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Dr. John has also been Assistant Professor and Director of the Rural Alaska Native Adult Program at Alaska Pacific University. She has authored numerous academic articles and a book on Native Alaskans and has presented her work at dozens of local, national, and international professional conferences.

Dr. John currently serves on the Alaskan State Council Arts Board and is the former Chair of the Traditional Native Arts Panel. She is also the recipient of the Governor's Distinguished Humanities Educator Award. Dr. John received her B.S., M.Ed., and Ph.D. from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Derek J. Bailey



Derek J. Bailey was sworn in as Tribal Chairman on December 11, 2008. He is the fifth Chairman since the Grand Traverse Band was federally reaffirmed on May 27, 1980, and is the youngest in the tribe's history. Mr. Bailey served on the Tribal Council from 2004 through 2008, over 2 of those years were as Secretary on the Executive Council.

Mr. Bailey is currently the Chairman of the Inter-Tribal Council, and has recently been selected as the Chairman of Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority (CORA), which is comprised of five tribes. Along with those positions, he was also appointed as one of two Bemidji Area Representatives to the Indian Health Service Director's Tribal Consultation Committee. In May 2010, Mr. Bailey was appointed by President Obama to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

He received a master's degree in social work from Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in 1998. He has extensive work experience in both clinical and administrative work in the area of behavioral health. Mr. Bailey has worked in the past for GVSU, teaching as an adjunct professor in their Master of Social Work program. He and his wife, Tonia, reside in Leelanau County with their five children: Panika, Nimkees, Daanis, Ohsaw Kihew, and Maengun.

Robin A. Butterfield



An enrolled member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska with ancestry also from the White Earth Ojibewa Tribe of Minnesota, Robin Butterfield has over 30 years of experience as an educator. She works as a Senior Liaison within the Minority Community Outreach Department National Education Association (NEA). Before working at NEA, Ms. Butterfield was the Professional Development Specialist at the Center for School Improvement within the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Albuquerque, NM. Ms. Butterfield recently managed the contracts with 13 tribally controlled community colleges and state universities, providing staff development to Bureau of Indian Affairs funded schools.

Ms. Butterfield worked at the classroom level in tribal and public schools in WI; coordinated the Salem-Keizer Indian Education Program at the district level; served in the position of Indian Education/Civil Rights Specialist for the State of Oregon for nine years; and worked at two different regional educational technical assistance centers, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in the Research and Development for Indian Education Program and the Gonzaga University Indian Education Center III Technical Assistance Center.

Ms. Butterfield has written publications focusing on parental involvement, curriculum development, teacher training, and multicultural education. She has served in many leadership capacities at the state and national level, and has been elected president while serving three 3-year terms on the National Indian Education Association Board of Directors. Ms. Butterfield has delivered hundreds of workshops on a wide variety of topics; has created a leadership program for Indian middle and high school aged youth; and has a broad network of individuals and organizations in the American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities. She is the proud parent of three children, one of whom just graduated from the University of Oregon and two who are still enrolled in the same university.

Deborah Jackson-Dennison



Born in Fort Defiance, AZ, Dr. Deborah Jackson-Dennison is of Scottish decent of the McPherson Clan on her maternal side, while her paternal heritage is of the Kin'ya'anni (Towering House) Clan of the Navajo Indian people and her paternal grandfather is of the Ashi'hi' (Salt) Clan. Known to most as "Debbie," she and her sisters grew up in the competitive world of both Indian and Professional rodeo participating nationally in barrel racing competitions in the Indian and women's professional rodeo circuits. She and her husband, Karlets Dennison, have three children; Kyle, Devyn, and Kassidy, and together they all continue the lifestyle of cattle ranching and rodeo from their home in Tohatchi, NM.

Dr. Jackson-Dennison earned an Associate of Arts degree from Dine' (Navajo Community) College and a Bachelor of Arts degree in education was earned from the University of New Mexico. She taught both at the high school and college levels for 11 years prior to returning to successfully complete both her Master's and Doctor of Education degrees in educational leadership and policy studies at Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, in 1997 and 2001, respectively. Dr. Jackson-Dennison credits her father, Dr. Dean C. Jackson, a Navajo educational leader with us only in spirit today, for instilling the ability to maintain perseverance and resilience as she carries out the leadership responsibilities for the betterment of Indian Country. She has now been in education for over 25 years.

In 2002, Dr. Jackson-Dennison became the first Navajo woman in Arizona to become a public school Superintendent of Schools for Window Rock Unified School District No. 8, which is also her alma mater. In 2006, Dr. Jackson-Dennison was then selected to serve as Superintendent of Schools for a neighboring Navajo Nation public school district, 30 miles west of Window Rock, in Ganado, AZ. She continues to look toward her father's teachings and legacy on the Navajo philosophy of life-long learning in the field of Navajo Indian Education as the foundation to integrate research-based school reform as a means to provide quality and culturally relevant learning for all stakeholders (i.e., students, parents, teachers, staff, and community members) who all have a vested interest in the betterment of nation-building for the Navajo Indian people and society.

Dr. Jackson-Dennison believes passionately in the ideology of continuous school improvement for quality and excellence in education for the Navajo Indian students she serves. In 2009, Dr. Jackson-Dennison returned to her former post as Superintendent of Schools for Window Rock Unified School District, where once again she and her team are striving to revitalize the Embracing Change for Student Learning systemic reform model to correlate with the Navajo philosophy of life long-learning while encompassing the components of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to be reauthorized for her Navajo Indian students to have the quality education system they deserve.

Sam McCracken



Sam McCracken, General Manager of Nike's N7 programs and Chairman of the N7 Fund, is a member of the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes in northeastern Montana on the Ft. Peck Indian Reservation.

Mr. McCracken began his Nike tenure in 1997 at Nike's Wilsonville distribution center. He was quickly asked to utilize his experience and passion to manage the revitalization of the Native American Employee Network, one of several Nike diversity programs. Shortly thereafter, Mr. McCracken proposed a business development strategy targeting Native American communities with the goal of increasing health and wellness through physical activity. He became the Manager of Nike's Native American Business in 2000 and has led the development of the Nike Air Native N7 shoe, the N7 retail collection, and the N7 Fund, which is aimed at helping to create access to sport for Native American and Aboriginal youth in the United States and Canada.

He has been recognized through several prestigious award nominations for his passion and work. He was honored in July 2004 with Nike's Bowerman Award, named after influential Nike co-founder and revered track and field coach Bill Bowerman. The annual award recognizes Nike employees who "Remember the Man" by embodying the Bowerman legacy of tireless motivation, innovation, and inspiration.

Mr. McCracken was also honored in 2004 for his work by the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge, who awarded him its prestigious George Washington Honor Medal for his commitment to Native communities on health promotion programs. He was singled out for exemplifying "the essence of the National Awards by promoting an understanding and appreciation for our country's rich heritage and unique freedoms," according to Freedoms Foundation President and CEO Aaron Siegel.

In April 2007, he was coined a "corporate change maker" and recognized as one the 20 most innovative "Intrapreneurs" in the world by sustainability.com. More recently, he has been honored with the 2010 President's "Leadership Award" from the National Indian Gaming Association for Nike's commitment to Health Promotions Disease Prevention with native communities across the U.S.

In his spare time, Mr. McCracken enjoys playing golf, traveling, or being in a gym coaching girls' basketball in Sherwood, OR, where he currently resides with his wife.

Wayne Newell



Wayne Newell is from Indian Township in Maine. He is a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Educated at the local schools, Mr. Newell earned a master's degree in 1971 in the field of educational administration from Harvard University.

Mr. Newell's first love is the preservation of the Passamaquoddy language. In 1971, he directed the first bilingual/bicultural education program for the Passamaquoddy Tribe. This program included the introduction of a writing system for the Passamaquoddy language that continues to be spoken and written by tribal members today. He authored and co-authored over 40 reading books written in the Passamaquoddy/Maliseet language. He worked with several tribal members and linguists which recently published a dictionary with more than 18,000 entries.

He has also been active in his tribe's continuing struggles for justice for Native people. He has served on many of the tribe's leadership positions. Currently he serves on the Passamaquoddy Tribal Council, and he was a former Representative of the Maine State Legislature. Mr. Newell was previously appointed by former President Jimmy Carter to serve on NACIE in the late 1970s. For over 29 years, Mr. Newell has served as President of Northeastern Blueberry Co., a tribally owned business that grows wild blueberries.

Mr. Newell has an extensive relationship with the University of Maine education system. He was part of the original formation of university's Native Studies Program. In May 1990, Mr. Newell received a distinguished achievement award from the University of Maine at Machias. Mr. Newell currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System.

Mr. Newell's most prized position in life is being married to Sandy for 42 years, a father to 4 children and "grandpa" to many grandchildren. Mr. Newell is a story teller and singer of Passamaquoddy and other Native music. He and fellow singer Blanch Sockabasin recently appeared at the American Folk Festival in Bangor, Maine, at the Library of Congress, and at the Millennium Stage of the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. He serves as emcee during the tribe's annual Native Day celebrations that are held on the second weekend in August at Sipayik (Pleasant Point), Maine.

MaryJane Oatman-Wak Wak



Mary Jane Oatman-Wak Wak is an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe from Kamiah, ID. She was appointed as Idaho's first Indian Education Coordinator by Idaho's Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2007. She was previously an Education Specialist for the University of Idaho's Northwest Nations Education Opportunities Center. She has been involved in language preservation efforts and native language instruction in PreK-20 settings, college transition skills, and teaching elders the basics of computer skills.

She is a graduate of Lewis and Clark State College with a bachelor's degree in justice studies and a minor Nez Perce language and is working toward completion of a master's degree at the University of Idaho. In 2008, she was awarded the national University Professional & Continuing Education Association's Outstanding Non-Traditional Student Award. In 2009, she was the recipient of the Alumni of the Year award at Lewis-Clark State College and established the first ever chapter of the Native American Alumni Association.

During the October 2009 National Indian Education Association (NIEA) convention, Ms. Oatman-Wak Wak was elected to serve as NIEA President, representing American Indians, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives at the national level. She was a recipient of the 2009 Women of Today and Tomorrow award from the Girl Scouts of America, and in June of 2010, she was appointed by President Obama to serve on the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. She has two sons, Jackson and Wayne, and is grateful to our Creator for giving her the gift of motherhood.

Stacy Phelps



Stacy Phelps is an enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe in South Dakota. He currently coordinates the South Dakota GEAR UP and is the Chief Executive Officer of the American Indian Institute for Innovation. Due to his efforts working with American Indian students in early college readiness programs and developing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs at Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU), Mr. Phelps was presented with a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring in a White House ceremony in January 2010. In July 2010, the White House appointed him to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. In 2008, South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds appointed Mr. Phelps to the South Dakota State Board of Education. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and his Master of Science degree in educational technology from Dakota State University. He is completing his doctoral degree in adult higher education at the University of South Dakota.

During his 12-year tenure while working within the TCU setting, Mr. Phelps served as Department Chair for Math and Science and worked as a Project Manager for several grant programs. He served as Project Director and Principal Investigator and managed a consortium of five TCUs in South and North Dakota. The consortium focused on developing bachelor's level degree opportunities in STEM for American Indians at TCUs. At the conclusion of this endeavor, the TCU partners had flourished. Three STEM research centers were constructed on reservations at the TCU, the development of the first EPA-certified Analytical Testing Lab occurred at Oglala Lakota College, over 10 new STEM degree programs to serve tribal students were implemented, over new 20 classroom facilities to support STEM education were constructed, a 17-site multi-state distance education network was created, and over 50 new reservation-based STEM professionals in tribal communities were graduated from a newly established pipeline at the TCU.

As an undergraduate student, Mr. Phelps founded and expanded a summer residential pre-college enrichment program for American Indian youth. The cohort-oriented program targets students and their family beginning in Grade 8 and follows them through 4 years of high school. Since 1992, outcomes of operating this very successful effort are nothing short of astonishing and yielded a transferable model.

Over the past few years, Mr. Phelps has led an effort on behalf of the National Science Foundation to develop a national pre-engineering partnership model between TCUs and regional-based mainstream colleges and universities. This effort will focus on increasing the number of American Indian bachelor's level engineers through partnerships with TCU and mainstream engineering institutions. Recently, he was asked by the South Dakota Board of Regents to develop a baseline study focused on increasing the success rate of American Indian students at six state regional colleges and universities across South Dakota.

S. Alan Ray



Dr. S. Alan Ray began his presidency of Elmhurst College on July 1, 2008. As Professor of Religion and Society, he holds academic appointments in the departments of political science and religious studies.

An Oklahoma native and citizen of the Cherokee Nation, Dr. Ray's scholarly interests include federal Indian law, religion and public life, and Native American studies. In 2009, Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chad Smith named him to the advisory board of the Nation's Cherokee language immersion school. In July 2010, President Barack Obama appointed Dr. Ray to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

Dr. Ray earned a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law, and he holds a doctorate in religion from the Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. He earned a master's degree from Harvard in theological studies as well as a master's degree in religious studies, and he graduated summa cum laude from St. Thomas Seminary College, Denver, CO. He has taught at Boston College, Harvard Divinity School, and Harvard Law School. Prior to coming to Elmhurst, he held senior administrative positions at the University of New Hampshire and Harvard Law School.

Dr. Ray serves as a trustee of the Chicago Theological Seminary and is active in several Chicago civic organizations, including the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. He belongs to professional organizations including the American Academy of Religion, American Political Science Association, Law and Society Association, and National Indian Education Association.

Alyce Spotted Bear



Alyce Spotted Bear (Numakshimiha—Guiding Woman) is an enrolled member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Tribes of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in ND. Ms. Spotted Bear, a former Tribal Chairman, has worked at all levels of Indian Education: pre-school, elementary, secondary, adult education, and college. She is a former high school teacher, principal, school superintendent, and federal programs administrator, as well as a bilingual program director. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in education at Dickinson State College in ND, and her Master of Education degree at Pennsylvania State College. While serving as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, she completed the coursework for a PhD (ABD) in Education at

Cornell University. At Dartmouth College, Ms. Spotted Bear served as Visiting Faculty for their Native American Studies Program.

As the vice president for Native American Studies at the Fort Berthold Community College (FBCC), Ms. Spotted Bear is working with staff and faculty to develop a baccalaureate program in Native American Studies. In addition to teaching, she is the Principle Investigator for a National Science Foundation-Documenting Endangered Languages grant and directs the FBCC's American Indian College Fund/Lilly Foundation Woksape Oyate grant for building academic excellence within the institution. Ms. Spotted Bear has served on myriad local, state, and national boards, and has received numerous honors and awards throughout her distinguished educator career.

Preferring to spend her weekends in the country with grandchildren Cheyenne, Bheri, and Senotae, and son Travis and his life-partner Crystal, Ms. Spotted Bear enjoys guiding the children through their homework. Having come from a family of 13 children, Ms. Spotted Bear believes the strength of family can determine the educational success of a student.

Virginia Thomas



Virginia Thomas is a member of the Muscogee Creek Nation. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from San Diego State University and has extensive background in Indian education with the philosophy, "Teach at all time." Currently she is the Manager of the Muscogee Creek National Johnson-O'Mally (JOM) Program where she provides technical assistance to local school administrators, JOM personnel, and parent committee on all facets of the JOM Programming in order to effectively assist them in developing and carrying out their programs. She plans, organizes, and oversees the day-to-day activities to assure compliance with the regulations. Ms. Thomas develops grant applications for federal funding as well as the National Council review. She reviews and approves all recommendations of funding for eligible schools and students to maintain an accurate account of funds allocated.

For 39 years, Ms. Thomas has worked with the JOM programs throughout the nation. She is currently President of the National JOM Association and was a Committee Member on the Joint Tribes OK JOM Conference Committee and the National JOM Handbook Rewrite Committee. Ms. Thomas provided testimony before Congress on JOM funding and successfully had the funding restored.

Ms. Thomas is a member of the National Advisory Council of the National Resource Center for Tribes. She is the Founder and Chair of the Muscogee Creek Nation (MCN) Challenge Bowl and Chair of MCN Language and Pageant Committees. She wrote tribal legislations to fund the MCN Language and Pageant Programs of MCN. Ms. Thomas received the Oklahoma Federation of Indian Women Award in Indian Education and the Greater Tulsa Area-Indian Affairs Commission Education Award.

Patricia Whitefoot



Born and raised in the original homelands of the Yakama Nation, Patricia Whitefoot lives in White Swan, WA, where she was raised by her maternal grandparents. She continues to live in the eastern foothills of the Cascade Mountains where early lessons learned were grounded in the natural environment. Frequent family trips along the Columbia River to fish and gather the traditional foods and visit family fostered a deep relationship among extended family and the diverse regional environment.

At the urging of her grandmother, Ms. Whitefoot obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with a Teaching Certificate in education from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, WA, and a Master of Arts degree from Ft. Wright College in Spokane, WA. For almost 40 years, she has been teaching and managing Indian Education programs from preschool to higher education at the local, tribal, and state level. Today, she is the Indian Education Director with the Toppenish School District on the Yakama Indian Reservation. Most recently, she served as the President of the National Indian Education Association and is currently the President of the Washington State Indian Education Association. She also serves as the Chair of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Education Committee, which she has held for almost 20 years. She also serves as the Native American Advisory Board Chair for the University of Washington in Seattle, WA.

Ms. Whitefoot has three children who all graduated from White Swan High School on the Yakama Reservation, and she has 10 grandchildren. In rearing her children and supporting her grandchildren and extended family, she notes that she is always amazed in the children's natural gift for learning. In her role as an educator, she advocates her ancestors' vision for holistic health as well as environmental and spiritual well-being originated in the Native languages, values, cultures, and histories of the aboriginal landscape.